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MASTER OF KUNG FU

WARRIORS
OF THE
GOLDEN
DAWN!



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"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. Since then, I have learned that my father is Dr. Fu Manchu, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my *name*.

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

MASTER OF KUNG FU!®

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

WARRIORS OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

PART
4

THE PHOENIX AND THE DRAGON

"DEEP WITHIN A CHINESE FORTRESS SET IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLE, I SPEAK TO MY FATHER, THE IMMORTAL FU MANCHU..."

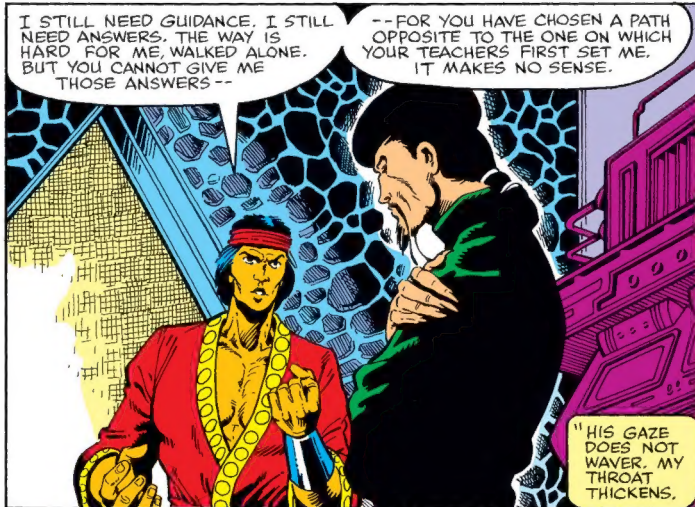
YOU HAVE MADE ME ALIEN, MY FATHER, RAISING ME IN A LOST TIME, RELEASING ME INTO A FOREIGN WORLD. I AM LIKE THE DRAGON REBORN LONG PAST HIS DAYS...

...A CREATURE NURTURED IN THE WORLD OF MYTH, NOW FORCED TO DWELL IN THE REALM OF HARSH REALITY.

WHY DO YOU BOTHER ME WITH SUCH FACTS, MY FORMER SON?

LF 679

DOUG MOENCH MIKE ZECK GENE DAY JOE ROSEN BEN SEAN ROGER STERN J. SHOOTER
WRITER PENCILER INKER LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR ED-IN-CHIEF



I STILL NEED GUIDANCE. I STILL NEED ANSWERS. THE WAY IS HARD FOR ME, WALKED ALONE. BUT YOU CANNOT GIVE ME THOSE ANSWERS --

--FOR YOU HAVE CHOSEN A PATH OPPOSITE TO THE ONE ON WHICH YOUR TEACHERS FIRST SET ME. IT MAKES NO SENSE.

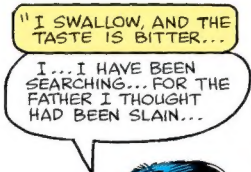
"HIS GAZE DOES NOT WAVER. MY THROAT THICKENS."



WHY? WHY HAVE YOU LEFT ME NOWHERE TO TURN?

"HIS EYES ARE STILL HARD, GLITTERING."

"HE WILL NOT ANSWER."



"I SWALLOW, AND THE TASTE IS BITTER..."

I... I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING... FOR THE FATHER I THOUGHT HAD BEEN SLAIN...



"BUT NAYLAND SMITH CAN NEVER SERVE AS THAT FATHER..."

I REJECT YOUR VILE GAMES OF DECEIT AND DEATH!



"...AND WHEN I SEEK ELSEWHERE..."

WE DO WHAT WE MUST.

BUT COME-- I WILL HELP YOU.



"...I FIND NOTHING BUT OTHER GAMES OF DECEIT, DEATH, AND BETRAYAL."



"HE TURNS AND FINALLY-- BUT ONLY WHEN HIS BACK IS TO ME-- HE SPEAKS..."

YOU DID HAVE A FATHER, SHANG-CHI... AND IT WAS ONLY YOUR BETRAYAL OF ME THAT MADE YOU LOSE THAT FATHER. YOU ARE NO LONGER MY SON... BUT YOU HAVE ONLY YOURSELF TO BLAME.

FOR YOU SEE, MY FORMER SON, I TOO HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING SLAIN... FOR THE DREAM SLAIN BY YOU...

"...THE GOLDEN DREAM IN WHICH THE WORLD RETURNS TO THE GLORY OF ITS PAST..."

"...THE DREAM SLAIN IN THE HEAVENS, WHEN I HAD COME SO CLOSE TO ATTAINING PARADISE..."

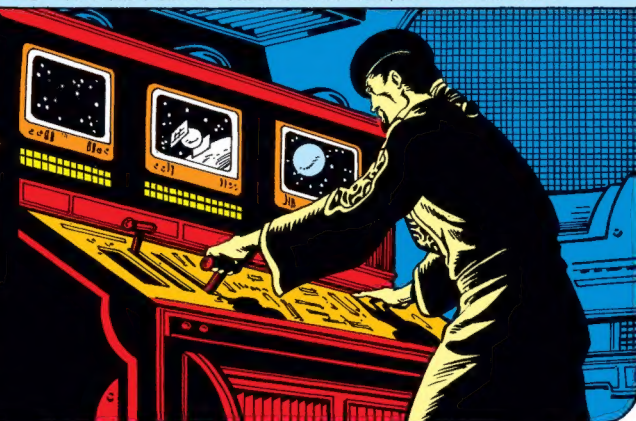


"HE CHANGES NOW, HIS VOICE AND FACE GLOATING..."

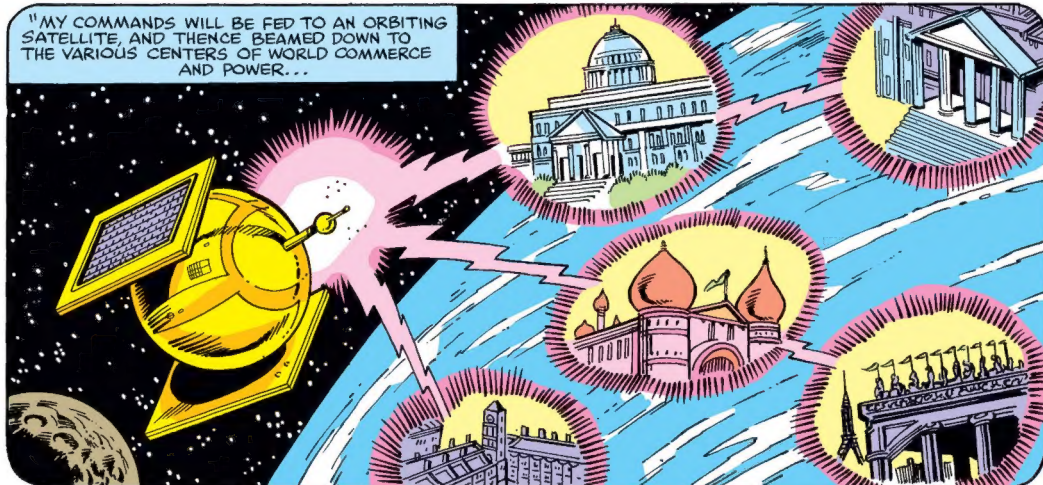
BUT MY DREAM HAS BEEN REBORN, JUST AS I HAVE BEEN REBORN-- LIKE THE PHOENIX FROM ITS OWN ASHES.

I HAVE IMPLANTED ELECTRODES INTO THE BRAINS OF SELECTED AGENTS FROM EVERY MAJOR POWER IN THE WORLD.

"THEIR MINDS CAN NOW BE CONTROLLED AND MANIPULATED BY ME-- AND ME ALONE-- THROUGH ELECTRONIC STIMULATION..."



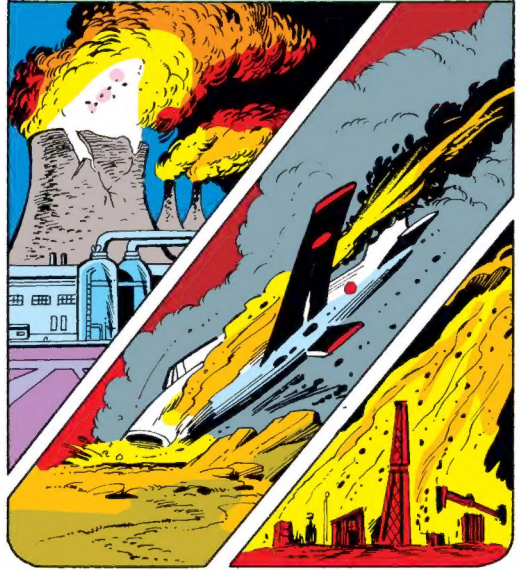
"MY COMMANDS WILL BE FED TO AN ORBITING SATELLITE, AND THENCE BEAMED DOWN TO THE VARIOUS CENTERS OF WORLD COMMERCE AND POWER..."



"...WHEREIN MY SELECTED AGENTS AWAIT, PRIMED TO REACT WITH UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE, THUS, ENACTING MY ELECTRONIC COMMANDS--"



"--THEY WILL CARRY OUT ACTS OF SABOTAGE, TERRORISM, CONFUSION, AND MISDIRECTION..."



...ULTIMATELY PLUNGING THE ENTIRE CIVILIZED WORLD INTO UTTER CHAOS, RENDERING IT MINE FOR THE EASY CONQUEST.

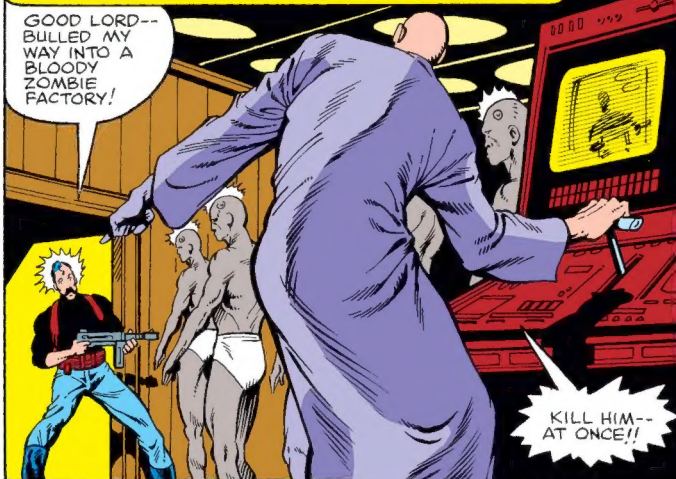


I COME TO YOU WITH A LAST SHRED OF HOPE, SEEKING AN IMPOSSIBLE PEACE BETWEEN US... AND YOU REPLY ONLY WITH YOUR MAD LOVE OF VIOLENCE.



"NOW IT IS MY TURN TO LOOK AWAY. I NO LONGER WISH TO SEE MY FATHER."

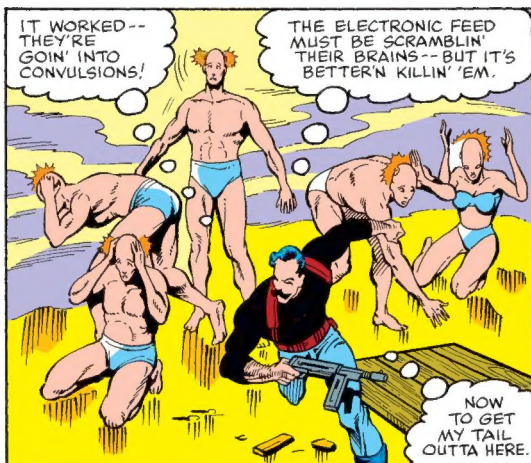
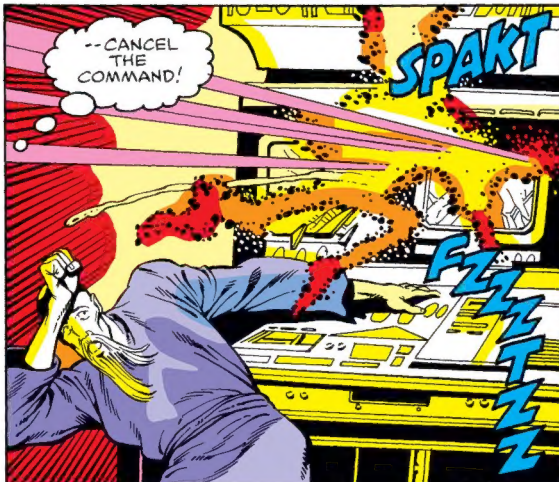
"IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO REMAIN WITH TARR..."



GOOD LORD-- BULLED MY WAY INTO A BLOODY ZOMBIE FACTORY!

HE'S FEEDIN' EM SOME KIND OF ELECTRONIC COMMAND... BUT EVEN THOUGH I'VE GOT A NEW CLIP OF AMMO IN MY PIECE, I CAN'T BLOW 'EM AWAY--AIN'T THEIR FAULT THEY TRYIN' TO WASTE ME...







I MERELY WISH YOU TO JOIN ME--



--IN THE GOLDEN DREAMS OF THE LOTUS.

EH--?



YOU...YOU LITTLE WITCH! I OUGHTTA WASTE YA RIGHT NOW... BUT I... I NEED...NEED...



YES, BLACK JACK TARR? WHAT IS IT YOU NEED? THE ALLURING SPELL OF FAH LO SUEE? IS THAT WHAT YOU NEED? THE DREAM WORLD DWELLING DEEP IN MY EYES...?



NO... I... I... YOUR EYES...



YES, BLACK JACK TARR... COME... AND SWIM IN THE SEA OF EYES...



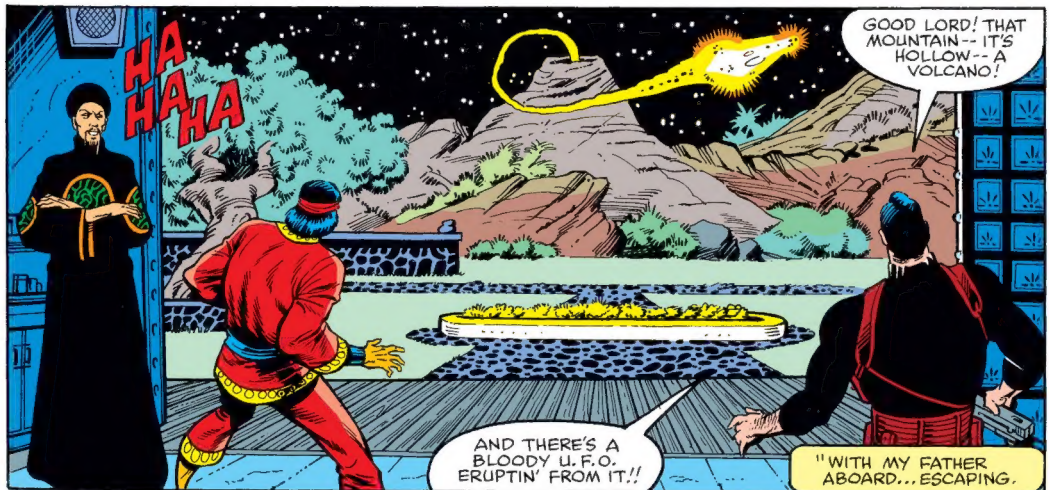
NO, CURSE YOU! SMITH... I NEED TO KNOW... WHERE SMITH IS... AND YOU'D BETTER TELL ME QUICK, WITCH... CUZ I'M A LITTLE OUT OF CONTROL ...

...AND...AND IF THIS PIECE GOES OFF, IT'LL BE...YOUR OWN FAULT...



IS *THAT* ALL YOU NEED? A SIMPLE DESIRE, BLACK JACK TARR, FOR SO LARGE A MAN, SMITH IS IN MOROCCO, WITH KARAMENAH.











"WE SPRINT FOR THE JUNGLE'S GLOOM..."

'LEAST MY ACHIN' BACK AIN'T ACTIN' UP.

"THEY PURSUE."



SOME KINDA TEMPLE UP AHEAD -- A PYRAMID -- AND PATHS BRANCHIN' LEFT AND RIGHT. WHICH WAY D'YA THINK WE SHOULD --



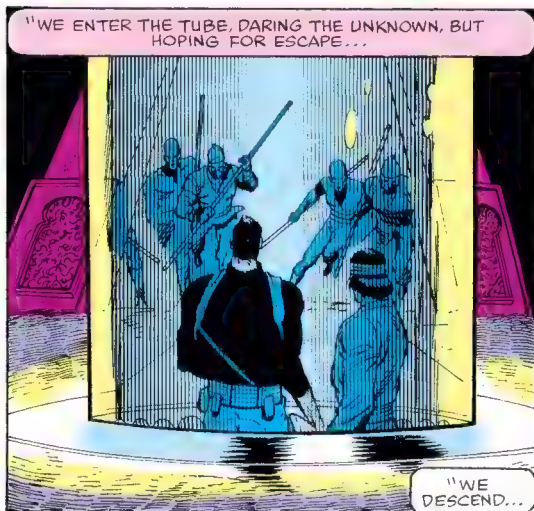
MORE OF 'EM FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION!

WE'RE TRAPPED!

INTO THE TEMPLE, TARR!



NOTHIN' INSIDE BUT THAT CRAZY TUBE. BUT WE AIN'T GOT A CHOICE -- THEY'RE STILL BEATIN' A PATH AFTER US!



"WE ENTER THE TUBE, DARING THE UNKNOWN, BUT HOPING FOR ESCAPE..."

"WE DESCEND..."



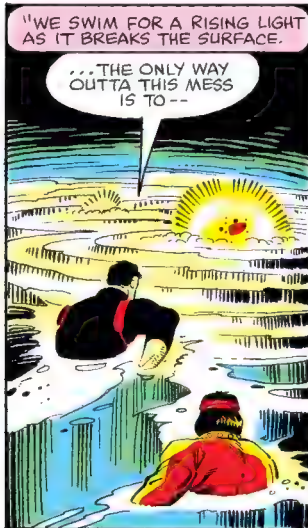
"... INTO A DANK GROTTO STIRRED BY A FAINT BREEZE."

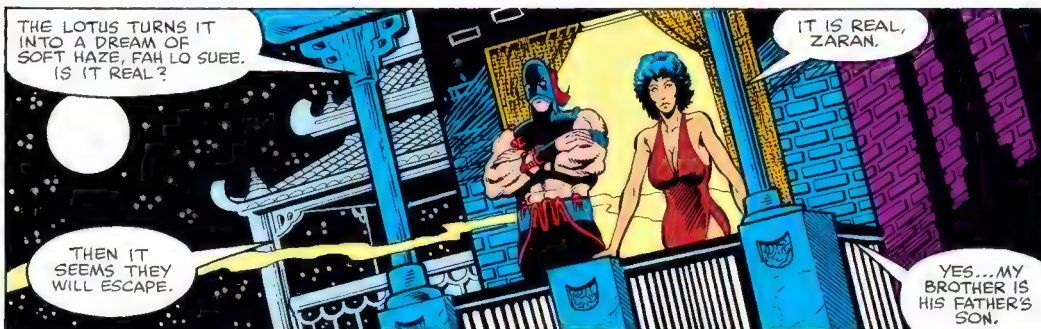
THIS WAY, TARR.

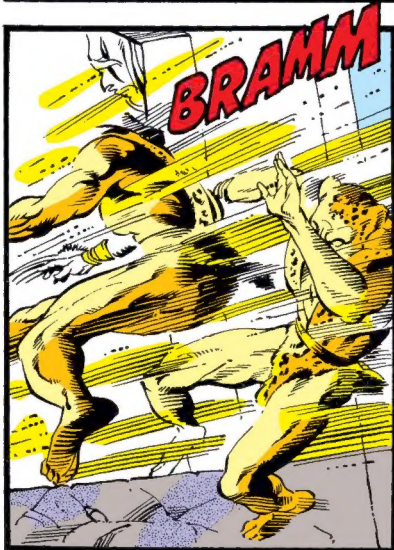
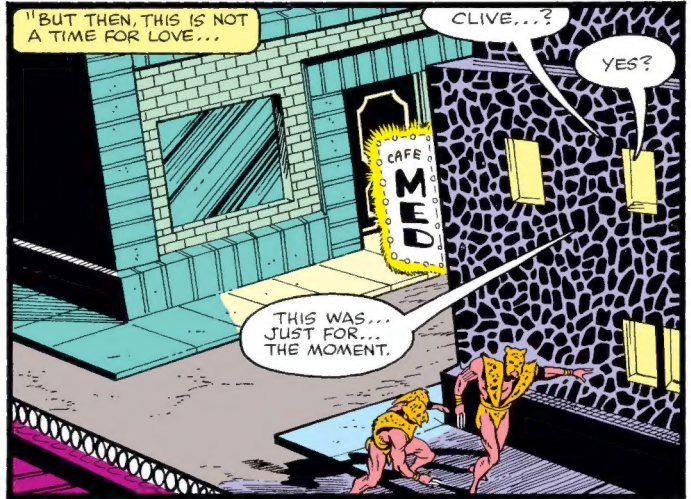
WHY? WE'RE JUST TRAPPED DOWN HERE NOW.

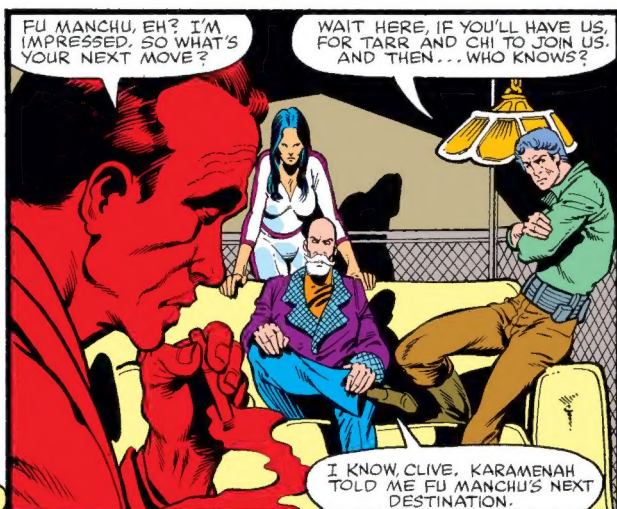
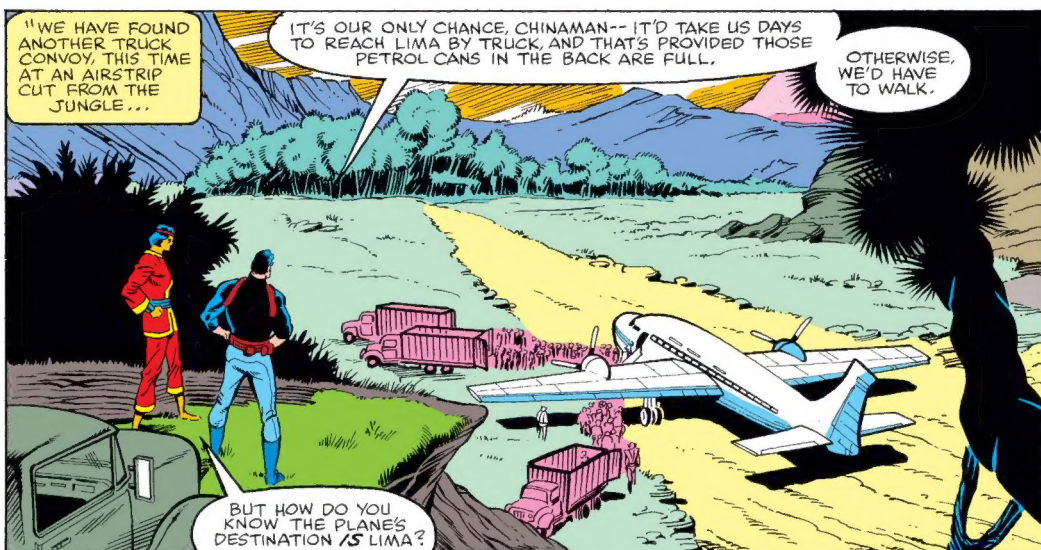
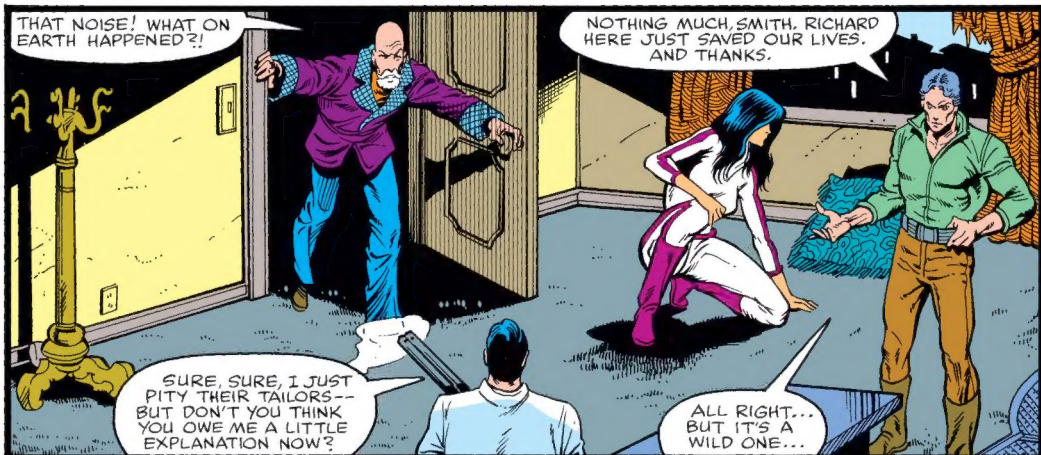
DON'T KNOW WHERE "HERE" IS, BUT THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY OTHER WAY OUT...

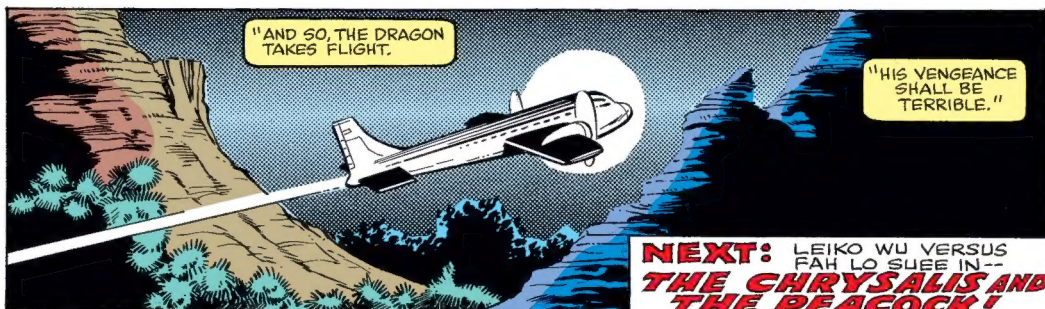












MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

JIM SALICRUP
EDITOR
BOB BUDIANSKY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Doug, Mike, and Gene,

During my short stint as a letter writer, I've never had the guts to write to MASTER OF KUNG FU. "What could I say that hasn't been said before?" I asked myself. And found the answer wanting. But hey, I'm a reckless kind of guy, so here goes on what I feel were the highlights of "Weapons."

The thing that Doug Moench has always most impressed me with is his ability to portray emotions in such a thoughtful, subtle manner. Most comicbook writers seem to think that emotion is best handled in a blunt, forced, heavy-handed style, which causes the average super hero to display the emotional maturity of an eight year old, if that. It is to Moench's credit that he has been able to so consistently break the bonds of depicting a relationship in a tawdry and often maudlin manner — a problem shackling even the best of other comics writers. In MOKF #77, the interplay between Shang-Chi and Leiko is handled very well, for example, and hardly comes off as trite or juvenile. Quite the opposite, and very nice.

On the artistic front: Mike Zeck, like good wine, has improved with age. His latest efforts easily outshine some of his earlier artwork. On top of this basic leap in quality, it's good to see that Mike's rendition of Shang-Chi has thinned down somewhat, because his earlier interpretation was far too brawny and overly muscular. Judging by some of Gene Day's recent work, he's a highly competent inker whose finishes on Mike's pencils are detailed without being muddy or overdone. Also very nice.

After reading #77, though, I did have some minor grievances. Why didn't Leiko put a dummy tape in the other leg's pocket? By throwing a dummy tape, she would have completely diverted attention from the real one. Also, after missing Chi with four straight knife throws, Zaran then hits Leiko's tire. I have enough common sense and physics knowledge to realize that a shot like that is just short of impossible. The incongruousness between the misses and the hit just did not sit well, especially since Zaran is a weapons master.

I'm not going to continue flooding you with praise, but I do want to say one more thing before signing off. In a medium where most titles which provoke intellectual curiosity or satisfaction seem to survive for only short spans of time, MASTER OF KUNG FU has — by retaining the freshness it boasted at the beginning — achieved something which none of the other "thinking" series have; it has weathered the test of time. And that may be the highest accolade of all.

Kurt S. Olsson
Troy, NY 12180

Thanks much, Kurt; we appreciate it. But as for Zaran's four "misses," if you'll take a second look at the scene in question, we're sure you'll notice that Chi is swiftly rolling out of the target path of each of the four knives. Ergo, rather than Zaran's aim being poor, it's a case of Chi's survival tactics being keenly excellent... as, we think you'll agree, befits a true Master.

Dear Editor:

Something just dawned on me, and I don't know why it took so long: MOKF is virtually the only comic on the market today that uses sweat in its pictures, and certainly the only one to use

it consistently. (It's even employed on the full-page ad seen recently in other Marvel mags.) It brings to mind the art done by Carter for the Fox Syndicate line some twenty years past. Not that its use here is quite so profuse — in fact, in #78 it is used only on page 16 — but when it IS used, it is quite effective.

And since I've started off with such a minor oddball matter, I might as well continue with other "bits and pieces" that caught my eye...

1) Zaran's face, with the lower part of his mask following the line of his upper lip, has a nice effect. It looks alternately like a permanent sneer and a fish face. Thus, he is firmly implanted in the mind as a repulsive creature, but in a subtle manner.

2) Page 15 was particularly impressive. The use of perspective with Zaran's bow and arrow guided the eye along the path of action very smoothly. The deflection of the arrow by Chi's wristband was a nice touch, and the embedding of the arrow in the moosehead was suitably bizarre as well as an ingenious bit of foreshadowing. Finally, the cutaways to Leiko were a fine counterpoint to the deadly goings-on in the lodge.

3) The frequent shots of Tarr loosening his bonds, while somewhat cliché in movies, were handled well here in the comics form and built up to the traditional cliffhanger on page 30. As usual, well done!

"The Mad Maple"
Toronto, Ontario

Good to hear from you again, Maple; we always enjoy your zany missives. Keep 'em coming!

Dear Sirs,

I've been reading MOKF for the last six years (ever since the 20¢ days!) and they've always been a source of pure pleasure. Going back to any of the past issues, I always find something new and interesting I hadn't noticed the third or fourth time around. The artwork has progressed to near perfection (not taking anything away from Jim, Al, Paul, John, and all the others who have given breath to Shang-Chi.) Rather, it seems that each artist has shown a different facet of Chi's personality. This "human quality," plus the striking dialogue, combine to make Shang-Chi jump right off the page. He's not a super hero battling weird creatures from Alpha Centauri, but simply a man, and that's what makes him so powerful.

Speaking of human quality, I like the way Doug has given Shang real feelings and inner conflict. He's been through a lot in his short life, so PLEASE don't kill off Leiko. They're a perfect couple (#s 70 and 76), even though their relationship took a little time to flower.

Finally, I hope Fu Manchu is still alive and kicking. His battles with his daughter and son have been classics!

Bill Herndon
(no address given)

As you've no doubt noticed, Bill, Fu is back with a bang, although he remains in the background of next issue's emotional tale — the better to set up our cataclysmic climax in the two following issues.

Be here, hear?

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(Signed) Ed Shukin — Business Manager
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